

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 11, 13-17 and 21-34 are pending in the application. In the Action, claims 1-6, 23, 24, 26-30 and 32-30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Harmala (U.S. No. 5,320,386). Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Harmala. Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Harmala and further in view of the applicant's so-called admitted prior art. Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Harmala. Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Loyd (U.S. Patent No. 5,320,386). Claims 1-7, 21, 23, 24, 26-30, and 31-33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Brine (U.S. Patent No. 6,752,730) in view of Hoult (U.S. Patent No. 3,702,702) and McNeely (U.S. Patent No. 5,511,777). The Applicants have amended independent claims 1 and 26 to overcome these rejections.

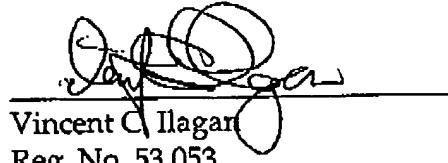
In particular, claims 1 and 26 now respectively recite the hollow tube having non-circular and polygon cross-sectional shapes. None of the cited references, whether taken individually or in any permissible combination, disclose a hollow tube having a non-circular cross-sectional shape or a polygon cross-sectional shape. For this reason alone, the claimed handle is novel and allowable notwithstanding Harmala.

Also, claim 26 was amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 31. Specifically, claim 26 now recites the insert being comprised of a foam material. In the Action, the Examiner stated that the foam material was obvious as a matter of design choice. However, one skilled in the art will appreciate that attaching a foam layer to the inner surface of a hollow tube can be somewhat difficult, particularly relative to attaching a carbon-reinforced layer to the tube. Accordingly, it is submitted that there is no motivation to modify the inner shaft disclosed in Harmala such that it is comprised of foam material. For this additional reason, it is submitted that the claim rejections have been rendered moot.

Conclusion:

In view of the foregoing, all of the claims remaining in the case, namely claims 1-7, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28-30, and 32-34, are in proper form and patentably distinguish from the cited references. Accordingly, allowance of the claims and passage of the application to issuance is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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